Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 COME-00 /078 W
----------071630Z 066201 /50
R 061308Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TORUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6688
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 3173

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS,TS
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE ERUPTS AT UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS

REF: TUNIS A-56

1. ON EVENING OF MAY 4 UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS STUDENT RESIDENCE LOCATED IN SUBURBAN LE BARDO WAS RANSACKED BY A BAND OF MASKED MEN ARMED WITH CLUBS, PIPES AND BICYCLE CHAINS. MAY 6 PRESS GAVE HEAVY PLAY TO THIS ERUPTION OF VIOLENCE AT UNIVERSITY WITH PHOTOS TO ILLUSTRATE PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL DAMAGES. ACCORDING TO GOT PRESSAGENCY (TAP) STORY, STUDENTS FROM A DORMITORY LOCATED IN RAS TABIA BROKE INTO THE LE BARDO DORMITORY AT DINNER TIME AND STARTED A GENERAL MELEE IN REFECTORY SHOUTING SLOGANS AGAINST SPECIAL GUARDS ON THE CAMPUS. THE INTRUDERS ATTACKED SEVERAL SPECIAL GUARDS ND ALSO STARTED FIRES, CUT TELEPHONE LINES AND DESTROYED ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS. POLICE ARRIVED SHORTLY, REESTABLISHED ORDER AND ARRESTED SOME SUSPECTS.

2. PRESS COVERAGE OF THE MAY 4 VIOLENCE WAS ACCOMPANIED
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BY STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF DESTOURIAN STUDENTS (BNED), A PARTY GOURP OF DESTOURIAN ACTIVISTS ON CAMPUS, ATTACKING THE VIOLENCE AND CALLING THE ATTACKERS "MASKED FASCISTS." THE BNED CLAIMED THAT THE PROVISIONAL UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE (CUP), AN AD HOC GROUP THAT DOMINATES STUDENT POLITICS, WAS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE VIOLENCE AT LE BARDO AND SAID THAT CUP'S OBJECTIVE IS TO DESTROY THE

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ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NATIONLAND TO DENY TO THE NATION'S
YOUTH THE INSTITUTIONS THAT GUARANTEE THEM A FUTURE.
EDITORIAL IN PSD DAILY L'ACTION ALSO ATTACKED THE VIOLENCE
AND SAID THAT IT SHOWS THE TRUE FACE OF STUDENT RADICALS
AND PROVES THAT ALL THEY WANT IS TO SOW ANARCHY. L'ACTION
ASSURED THE PUBLIC THAT THE REGIME KNOWS HOW TO DEFEND
ITSELF AGAINST SUCH SUBVERSIVES AND WILL NOT HESITATE TO DO SO.

3. SPEAKING AT A PARTY CELL MEETING IN THE TUNIS SOUKS
ON MAY 5, MINISTER OF INTERIOR TAHAR BELKHODJA CONDEMNED
THE VIOLENCE AT LE BARDO AND ASSURED THE PUBLIC THAT THE
POLICE, WHO ARE UNDER HIS RESPONSIBILITY, WILL MAINTAIN
ORDER AT THE UNIVERSITY.

4. THE UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS HAS BEEN PERCOLATING OVER
THE PAST WEEK WITH VARIOUS STRIKES ORGANIZED AT ITS
SEVERAL FACULTIES. IT APPEARS THAT THESE STRIKES HAVE
BEEN ORGANIZED BY RADICALS AND ARE BASED ON TRADITIONAL
STUDENT COMPLAINTS. FOREMOST AMONG THESE ARE USE OF
SPECIAL GUARDS TO MAINTAIN ORDER ON CAMPUS AND DEMANDS
THAT STUDENTS SUSPENDED FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITY BE RE-
INSTATED IN THE UNIVERSITY.

5. THE ERUPTION OF VIOLENCE ON MAY 4, APPARENTLY THE
RESULT OF A CLEAR PROVOCATION BY THE MASKED MEN DESCRIBED
IN THE TAP PRESS RELEASE, IS A DISTURBING DEVELOP-
MENT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GOT AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.
WE HAVE NEVER BEFORE HEARD OF ARMED GANGS ON CAMPUS BENT
ON DESTRUCTION AND DOING PHYSICAL HARM. STUDENT RADICALS
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HAVE DEPENDED ON THE GOOD WILL OF THE GENERAL STUDENT BODY FOR
THEIR SUCCESS ON CAMPUS AND IT SEEMS CURIOUS THAT THEY WOULD
INTENTIONALLY RISK LOSING SYMPATHY BY "BRINGING THE WAR
HOME" TO THE DORMITORIES.
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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 06-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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SAS ID: 2610690
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TAGS: PINT, PINS, TS, UNIVERSITY OF TUNIS
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